

TRIUMPHS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN

BY VANDERHEYDEN FYLES



THERE are few likely to deny that one of Ethel Barrymore's greatest charms is her extraordinary affection for her brothers, and her uncompromising belief in their ability. She and I were guests at the same country house just after Lionel Barrymore had sailed for Paris to devote himself to painting, having retired from the stage with the declaration that he would never return to it. When I shifted from one group to another I found the beautiful Miss Barrymore holding forth about the greatness of Lionel's Macbeth.

"Why, when did he play Macbeth, and where?" I asked, startled at never having heard of so important an undertaking.

"He never did," his sister answered calmly; "but if he had his Macbeth would have been the greatest of our day."

It has become so universally the custom to bewail the fact that Henry Irving never produced "As You Like It" at the Lyceum, to give Ellen Terry an opportunity as Rosalind, that her performance of the part has become a foremost figure in histrionic history. Few embodiments that actually achieved form and substance retain so prominent a place as this might have been; for Miss Terry's most ardent admirer can hardly contradict her when she says that she is now too old to create a Rosalind. Of course, unless a player has grown too old, or has retired from the stage, or from this life entirely, no promised performance of a classic role need be despaired of. The jests that have inevitably resulted from the long and frequently deferred appearance of David Warfield as Shylock, or of Louis Mann in the same role, should not confirm us in our doubts.

Eight years or so elapsed between Grace George's announcement of her Cyprienne in "Divorçons" and her revelation of it. And her Lady Teazle, which proved to be a most delightful element of the New Theater's revival of "The School for Scandal," was so long in coming into view that it had been put almost in the comic class, with the Mann and Warfield Shylocks and the Hamlet of William Gillette (who still did not prove to us that he did not smoke a cigar while he soliloquized). After the Grace George Lady Teazle we may revive our hope to see Margaret Anglin and Ethel Barrymore in that role that, deep down in their hearts, they have longed to play.

Maude Adams, it may be recollected, waited a long time before making good her promise to act in "As You Like It" and "Twelfth Night," and has not yet shown herself in "The Taming of the Shrew." Blanche Walsh thought she had secured her opportunity to play that role when, some years ago, Sol Smith Russell proposed playing Petruchio as incidental to his regular part of the season. So Miss Walsh resigned herself to a secondary place in "A Bachelor's Romance," in which Annie Russell was the comelious leading actress, because he wanted her for his Katherine. But the season worked on to its end, and the revival of the Elizabethan farce was still to appear.

JULIET is popularly supposed to be the goal of every actress; yet I happen to know that Beatrice and Lady Macbeth are the Shakespearean roles most studied by stars of the present period who have not yet found the chance to exhibit their performances to the public. When Mrs. Fiske finally takes her first plunge into Shakespeare since her early youth, it will be in "Much Ado About Nothing" or "Macbeth." Mrs. Leslie Carter's intention is the same. Indeed, a few years ago the latter went so far as to engage Charles A. Stevenson as Macbeth to her murderer. At the time it looked as though rivalry were due; for Charles Frohman prepared to present Margaret Anglin in the play, with Edwin Stevens as Macbeth. E. H. Sothern and Julia Marlowe recently presented themselves for the first time in the roles; and, in England, a little later, Sir

Herbert Tree finally played the Scottish Chieftain. The English Arthur Boucher and the Italian Ermete Novelli, with their wives, Violet Vanbrugh and Olga Giannini, have fulfilled "Macbeth" promises, though with small success,—promises that looked less likely of result, when they were made, than Sarah Cowell LeMoynes. However, it must be admitted that no one has ever taken Marie Dressler's announcement of her Lady Macbeth so seriously as herself.

It has always seemed to me that Ethel Barrymore would make a glorious successor to Ada Rehan as Viola. When I said that to her once, she said her mind was made up: her first Shakespearean play would surely not be "Twelfth Night," but "Much Ado About Nothing" or "As You Like It." The former seems to be the favorite of all; for, besides Miss Barrymore, Mrs. Fiske, and Mrs. Carter, Maude Adams, Margaret Anglin, and Grace George are ready with it. Eleanor Robson wished to play it; and Irene Vanbrugh prepared herself for a revival that George Alexander purposed making and then abandoned. Another that was near presentation was one in which the Beatrice was to have been Miss Barrymore to the Benedick of her uncle, John Drew.

Edwin Booth endeavored to utilize Salvini's prestige to create a new tradition for the casting of "Hamlet." When they made their famous co-starring tour, "Othello" of course allowed them to share honors equally; but the public demanded at least occasional performances of "Hamlet." The Italian was quite willing to subordinate himself to the role of the Ghost; but the American undertook to persuade him to play King Claudius, a really fine character that custom shamefully neglects. Booth felt that the example of Salvini would bring the part into its own again; but the signor would not be bothered studying its lines. So the example has remained unset. When Lawrence Barrett starred with Booth he wasted himself on the Ghost instead of dignifying King Claudius; and the custom has been followed by Frederick Warde, with Louis James, and by every secondary actor in a stellar combination.

When E. H. Sothern first prepared to show himself as Hamlet he determined to succeed as a tradition maker where Edwin Booth had failed. He engaged Edward Morgan, then leading actor of the Lyceum, to play King Claudius, and restored the lines, which are generally cut unmercifully. But he delayed his production half a year, and when he made it Mr. Morgan was no longer to be had. However, Mr. Sothern has not abandoned his determination. He and Julia Marlowe contemplate occasional performances of "Hamlet," with the actress as the Prince; and then Mr. Sothern will show what can be done by playing King Claudius himself.

WHEN Mr. Sothern has accomplished that reform, he might turn his attention to Polonius; for obviously that instead of the Grave Digger should be the first comedian's role. Indeed, when Constant Coquelin toured America in 1900, with Sarah Bernhardt, he prepared to play Polonius to her Hamlet. Whether it was mere laziness or the discovery that American tradition gave the Grave Digger first place, Coquelin shifted to that role at the last moment. By the way, speaking of Miss Marlowe and Machin Bernhardt as Hamlet, Julia Arthur was about to appear in that male character when she married and retired from the stage. That is another "memorable performance" that we undoubtedly shall never have a chance to see.

A Hamlet that we surely never will see is Richard Mansfield's. It was his greatest ambition to play the part. Of course it may more or less be said to be the ambition of every actor. Arnold Daly went so far as to gather his cast, of which I recollect no more than that Chrystal Herne was to have been the Ophelia and the late Isabelle Urquhart the Queen Gertrude. Not many people knew, and fewer still remember, that Henry Miller's ambition carried him still further. About ten years ago he played Hamlet in a few small towns, and then gave up the role and said no more about it. Mansfield's experience might have been the same had he not

benefited by the common-sense advice of Mrs. Mansfield. Of course, rumor may be wrong; it may not have been she who dissuaded him from measuring himself by Henry Irving and Forbes Robertson, and especially at a time when the Dane of Edwin Booth was fresher in the general memory. But, anyway, it is true that more than once Richard Mansfield put "Hamlet" very privately, almost secretly, in rehearsal, and then withdrew it.

THE first cast of a play that immediately takes its place as a modern classic almost inevitably establishes the fame of one or more of its leading actors. No more notable example can be cited than "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." In one night Mrs. Patrick Campbell emerged from the obscurity of inconsequential melodrama into the glow of international fame. There is small doubt that so excellent an actress would have made her way in any case; but there is no doubt that the first actress to play Paula Tanqueray, whoever she might have been, would have achieved fame. There are some roles that cannot help "make" a player, as Frou-Frou made the late Agnes Ethel, and as Zaza served for Mrs. Leslie Carter; but the point about Paula Tanqueray and Mrs. Campbell is that the actress was an afterthought. Elizabeth Robins was Pinero's choice, and she rehearsed the role. Why she did not play it, I have never known. But the result is that Miss Robins is still known to only the special few, while Mrs. Campbell's name rings round the histrionic universe.

Oddly enough, the substitution of Mrs. Campbell for Miss Robins was not the first important change in the cast of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." Sir Arthur wrote the play for John Hare; but Sir John had lately had such bad luck with "The Profligate," from which the prudish public of the period drew away as improper, that he became frightened at another Pinero play of the same sort; so he relinquished the drama to George Alexander. However, he still admired it and felt a lively interest in it; and he it was who took Sir Arthur and Sir George to a minor theater to see his discovery, Mrs. Patrick Campbell. It is to be noted, however, that George Alexander was not taking John Hare's place in casting himself for the leading male role of Aubrey Tanqueray, as Pinero wrote Cayley Drummie, the fussy, advising friend, for Hare. This part, by the way, was first acted by Cyril Maude, and it served him as a steppingstone to stardom. Oddly enough, he has established himself as the legitimate successor to many of the old comedy roles that were held for years as sacred to John Hare.

In America the experience of "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray" was not dissimilar. Daniel Frohman held the rights, and though his season at the Lyceum was a bad one, owing to lack of plays, he was afraid to produce this masterpiece lest he offend his public. But for his timidity Georgia Cayvan would have been the first American Paula Tanqueray, instead of Mrs. Kendal. It is not uninteresting to note the cast that came within a hair's breadth of being the American original in this great play, and the one that really was. Herbert Kelcey rehearsed the role of Aubrey Tanqueray, which W. H. Kendal acted. W. J. Le Moynes, instead of J. E. Dodson, would have been the Cayley Drummie; Fritz Williams, instead of G. P. Huntly, the Sir George Orreyed; Effie Shannon, instead of Annie Irish, the Ellean Tanqueray; and Mrs. Charles Walcott, instead of Mrs. A. B. Tapping, the Mrs. Cortelyou.

THE cast that just escaped introducing "Candida" to America is, in a way, even more interesting, because that play, when it finally did come, not only elevated Arnold Daly from the ranks to stardom, but it inaugurated the craze for Bernard Shaw. Ten years before Richard Mansfield put "Candida" in rehearsal. He even imported Janet Achurch, the original Candida, to America; and, when he abandoned the play, had to pay her salary for some weeks without having any use for her. So Miss Achurch, instead of Dorothy Donnelly, would have been our first Candida. Oddly enough, Mr. Mansfield did not purpose playing Marchbanks; but engaged Edwin Arden for that role, casting himself for Morell the clergyman.

One other cast for "Candida" was formed and had advanced considerably with rehearsals before the one that, in 1903, was actually to be the American original. In 1900, Arnold Daly was acting a minor part with Julia Marlowe in "Barbara Frietchie"; while Robert Loraine, who, four or five years later, established himself suddenly as a star by means of Shaw's "Man and Superman," was leading actor of Daniel Frohman's stock company, recently transferred from the old Lyceum to Daly's Theater. Loraine and Daly formulated a scheme to give "Candida" at a special matinee. Mr. Daly was to play Marchbanks, as, in similar circumstances, he did three years later; and Mr. Loraine cast himself for the clergyman. Hilda Spong and Alston Skipworth, both of the Daniel Frohman company, entered heartily into the scheme and diligently rehearsed, the one as Candida, the other as Prossy, in which role, you will recall, Louise Closser Hale was our original. But Miss Marlowe went on tour, and Mr. Daly, of necessity, went with her; so the "Candida" plan went over for three years.

The "Herod" of Stephen Phillips is another modern

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